

What is Claimed:

- 1 1. A process for manufacturing a soup, comprising the steps of:
 - 2 forming an admixture of dry ingredients and a physically-modified, plant-derived starch, the starch being able to withstand temperatures of 260° F;
 - 4 adding one or more liquid ingredients to the admixture to form a powder slurry;
 - 6 heating the powder slurry at a sufficient temperature for a sufficient time to allow swelling of the starch to form a swelled soup base; and
 - 8 adding bulky ingredients to the swelled soup base to form a bulk soup.
- 1 2. The process of claim 1, further comprising sterilizing the bulk soup to form shelf-stable soup.
- 1 3. The process of claim 1, wherein the heating the powder slurry step is performed for about 15 minutes at about 92° C, and a 5% heated slurry of the starch has the viscosity of 250-500 BU at 92° C and 425-625 BU at 92° C after 15 minutes.
- 1 4. The process of claim 1, wherein the starch is made from organically-grown corn or maize.
- 1 5. The process of claim 1, wherein the swelled soup base has a viscosity of about 10 cm to about 23 cm.
- 1 6. The process of claim 1, further comprising, prior to the adding step, the step of precooking the bulky ingredients.
- 1 7. The process of claim 1, further comprising the steps of filling containers with the bulk soup and sterilizing by retorting the containers.
- 1 8. The process of claim 1, wherein the swelled soup base is made by heating the slurry to between about 160°F and about 200°F.
- 1 9. The process of claim 8, wherein the swelled soup base is heated for about twenty minutes.
- 1 10. The process of claim 7, further comprising, prior to the filling step, the step of preheating the bulk soup to about 160° F.

1 11. The process of claim 1 wherein the liquid ingredients are selected
2 from the group consisting of water, broth, juice, liquid dairy products, and vegetable
3 purees.

1 12. A process for filling a plurality of containers with a homogeneous
2 mixture of soup, comprising:

3 forming a slurry of a physically modified starch and a liquid;

4 heating the slurry at a sufficient temperature for a sufficient time to allow
5 substantial swelling of the starch to form a swelled base;

6 filling containers with the swelled base; and

7 sterilizing the swelled base in the containers.

1 13. The process of claim 12, further comprising, prior to the filling step,
2 the steps of adding bulky ingredients to the swelled base and mixing to form a generally
3 homogeneous bulk soup.

1 14. The process of claim 13, further comprising, prior to the adding step,
2 the step of precooking the bulky ingredients.

1 15. The process of claim 14, wherein the bulky ingredients are selected
2 from the group consisting of vegetables, legumes, barley, bulgur wheat, fruits, beans,
3 pasta, and rice.

1 16. The process of claim 12, wherein the slurry is heated to between about
2 160° F and about 200° F.

1 17. The process of claim 16, wherein the slurry is heated for between
2 about 15 and about 30 minutes.

1 18. The process of claim 12, wherein the slurry is heated for about twenty
2 minutes.

1 19. The process of claim 12, wherein the slurry is heated to about 195°F
2 for about twenty minutes.

1 20. The process of claim 13, further comprising, prior to the filling step,
2 the step of heating the bulk soup to about 160°F.

1 21. A process for making organic soup, comprising:
2 making a slurry from a physically modified plant-derived starch and a
3 liquid;
4 heating the slurry at a sufficient temperature and for a sufficient time to
5 form a swelled soup base;
6 mixing precooked bulky organic ingredients with the swelled soup base to
7 form bulk soup; and
8 sterilizing the bulk soup.

1 22. The process of claim 21, wherein the slurry is heated to between about
2 160°F and about 200°F.

1 23. The process of claim 22, wherein the slurry is heated to about 195°F.

1 24. The process of claim 21, wherein the slurry is heated for about twenty
2 minutes.

1 25. The process of claim 21, further comprising, prior to the sterilizing
2 step, the steps of preheating the bulk soup and filling glass containers with the preheated
3 bulk soup.

1 26. A soup product made according to the process comprising the steps
2 of:

3 forming a slurry of a physically modified starch and a liquid;
4 heating the slurry at a sufficient temperature for a sufficient time to allow
5 substantial swelling of the starch to occur, to form a swelled base;
6 filling containers with the swelled base; and
7 sterilizing the swelled base in the containers to form a soup product.

1 27. A soup product made according to the process comprising the steps
2 of:

1 28. A soup composition comprising:

from about 0.2% to about 4% by weight of a physically modified plant-derived starch;

4 a liquid component of about 40% to about 60% by weight; and

about 5% to about 50% bulky ingredients, the bulky ingredients being suspended in a generally homogeneous composition, wherein the bulky ingredients do not phase separate and do not settle in the generally homogenous composition for a predetermined period of time.

1 30. The soup composition of claim 28, wherein the starch is made from
2 organically-grown corn or maize.

31. The soup composition of claim 28, wherein the bulky ingredients are selected from the group consisting of organic vegetables, legumes, bulgur wheat, barley, fruits, rice, and pasta.